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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

BOOKS.

THE NATIVE TRIBES OF CENTRAL AUSTRALIA. By BALDWIN SPENCER and F. J. GILLEN. London: Macmillan & Co. 1899. Pp. x, 671.

With this remarkable and epoch-making work comes a flood of long-desired illumination. Both authors are members of the important Arunta tribe, and one has spent the greater part of the last twenty years in the centre of the continent. In 1896-97 they witnessed at Alice Springs a series of ceremonies which occupied more than three months. The desert country is inhabited by tribes distributed into small local groups, each of which takes its name from some one animal or plant, and each of which has its sacred storehouse in a cleft or cave, where are concealed the sacred objects. At intervals of time are performed ceremonies designed to multiply the animal or plant of the group to which the performers belong. It is with regard to the philosophy connected with these groups that the book is especially instructive.

As with North American Indians, traditional history begins with a period at which the land is supposed to be inhabited by mythical ancestors conceived as animal or plant men, more powerful than their living descendants, and who are conceived as inconsistently fluctuating between human and animal characteristics. To this age is given the name of Alcheringa. The ancestors, in course of migrations, carried with them amulets, sacred stones called Churinga; where they went into the ground, at the term of their activity, the spirit part remained in these amulets, while a rock or plant also rose to replace the body; in the shrine so formed, a number of other Churinga were deposited. The spirits present in these holy places are disposed to take second birth, and, the idea of natural conception being unknown, it is conceived that the first perception by a woman of the future birth of a child is due to the entrance into her person of a spirit, whose totem is determined by the spot; for if the Oknanikilla belongs, for instance, to spirits of emu men, then the child will be an emu, without regard to the totem of its mother. The tribe being divided into two exogamous groups, the child, among the Arunta, will follow the class of its father; but the Alcheringa men of the totem will have belonged mainly to one or other of the two groups, and the class chiefly represented will have the first chance in the choice of headman. The child is therefore the reincarnation of an ancestor who was also animal, plant, cloud, water, or fire, the native mind having no difficulty in conceiving that the spirit embodied in any of these may be incarnated in a human body. (On the other hand, as may be observed, the essence of the beast or element is thought of as human, and may and does appear and act in human form, this being the mental root of polytheism, a method of imagination reverting to the most primitive mental conditions.)

When the spirit is born as a babe, he has no further use for the Churinga

stone, which accordingly is dropped in the locality; this is searched for, and becomes the amulet or Churinga of the babe. If not found, then another is made from the Nanja, that is, the tree or stone in which the spirit formerly resided. The Nanja tree is connected with the life of the child; if it were cut down, some evil would befall him: any creature on the tree is sacred. The Churinga of the child is deposited in the cave or crevice called the Ertnatulunga, which belongs to each totem centre, along with the other Churinga of members of the totem, and is called the Churinga nanja; no woman may approach the place, or even take a path passing in the neighborhood. The Ertnatulunga become havens for wild animals, which in their locality may not be injured. The spot is also the rudiment of a city of refuge, for a person pursued by others may not be touched while he remains near. A resemblance to modern European usage may be noted, in that the scrapings of the Churinga, mixed with water, are used for medicine (as in Ireland is grave-dirt from the resting-place of a holy man). Robbery of an Ertnatulunga is a rare occurrence; where such removal has taken place, mourning ensues as if for the dead.

With the totems are associated certain sacred ceremonies called Intichiuma, performed at the season associated with the multiplication of the totem animals or plants, and having for their object the promotion of such increase.

In connection with the rites of the kangaroo totem it is made clear that, according to native conception, in the Alcheringa existed animals as well as men: an aged man of the Okira totem is taken to be the reincarnation of a famous kangaroo of the ancient time, who was hunted by wild dogs, killed, and reanimated; in the rites this event is celebrated. Two blocks of stone supposed to represent kangaroos are rubbed, and a rock-painting made to indicate the fur and bones of the animal. Veins are opened in the arms of young persons, and the blood made to spirt on the ceremonial stone.

Each totemic group, say the authors, is supposed to have a direct control over the numbers of the animal or plant the name of which it bears, and in theory at least have the first right to the animal or plant. But eating of the totemic animal is done sparingly, and as a rite calculated to confer power rather than with the purpose of giving sensual pleasure. The authors, however, conceive that originally there was no tabu against consumption of the totem, such freedom being indicated by the traditions.

An elaborate account is given of initiation ceremonies, which include circumcision. In these may be noted that the candidate is instructed in the events of his totem in the Alcheringa; thus, in a kangaroo ceremony, the youth was informed of the manner in which, in a given place, the ancestral kangaroo man died, his spirit at a later time passed into the body of a woman, and was born again as a man of the totem having the ancestral name; it is for the old men to decide what particular spirit is embodied in any given individual, and has the secret and sacred name corresponding. These Alcheringa histories are represented in the sacred pole or cross-framework, by decoration thoroughly conventional, and changing meaning according to the ideas to be represented, as also by dramatic action and

costume. At Alice Springs, the evening star is considered to descend into the earth at a particular spot where went down a woman of the Alcheringa; and a child born near that stone will belong to the evening star totem, and be a reincarnation of the original evening star woman, and accordingly receive the same name.

Accounts of the Alcheringa traditions are furnished, by which it appears that these include, as usual with primitive faiths, narrations respecting the chaotic period, the transformations by which the earth was made habitable, effected by beings who are described as "self-existing," the interference of demonic beings, and the defeat and slaughter of the latter. The marital relations in this period seem not to have been restricted by totem. Long migration legends are related, and no doubt contain intermingled historical elements.

In Arunta burial customs, the habit of feeding the ghost does not appear. Speaking generally, nothing except the Churinga amulets are interred with the dead. The camp in which death occurred is burned and the contents destroyed. During the period of mourning, the name of the dead is not mentioned, or only in a whisper, lest the spirit, which walks abroad, should consider that his relatives fail in respect. The spirit, however, is supposed to pass the greater part of the time in the cave which is the Alcheringa birthplace, and here, underground, is a region closely answering to a paradise. From the Nanja, that is, stone or tree marking the abode of any Alcheringa ancestor, arises a double called Arumburinga, which serves to watch over the spirit tenanted the Churinga, and which becomes the guardian spirit of the human personage who is the reincarnation of the ancestor (we have thus both a counterpart and an explanation of the Roman genius); these doubles, together with the spirits, form collectively a group, Iruntarinia, the nearest approach to an Australian pantheon. With these Iruntarinia medicine-men may communicate; the like privilege is bestowed on certain children, who have the "open eye," and who must be serious and sedate. The Iruntarinia are in appearance youthful and smooth-faced; their bodies are shadowy, and they decorate themselves with a precious down. They have no fires, but kill game and eat it uncooked. They may carry off women, and are in general beneficent, though frequently cruel; they destroy by shooting pointed sticks into the body, which can be removed only by a skilled medicine-man. Sometimes they play pranks on wandering travellers. They make medicine-men by communicating new organs to such persons as sleep in certain caves.

The mythology includes nature-myths; thus it is conceived that the sun issued from the earth in the form of sisters, one carrying a newly-born child. The race of the sun-women is alive, being reincarnated in descendants who dramatically represent the original advent. The account is far from clear; it would seem that the visible sun is formed by the headdress of the younger sister.

The authors do not find in the beliefs or ceremonies invocation of superior beings; yet certain of the acts they describe, such as the cleansing of the Churinga and the use of blood in ritual, appear to be acts of worship; also, with

reference to the spirits who animate and direct medicine-men, it would seem that there must be performances of expressions which reflect the reverence with which they are regarded. If certain of these ancestral spirits should be found to resemble veritable deities, it would be no more than is indicated by the accounts obtained from other parts of Australia, and would be in no way inconsistent with the theory of origins as set forth by the writers. At any rate, the dramatic presentations of myths constitute a form of worship, and the writer of this notice ventures to regard such relation as corroborating views previously expressed by him in regard to the place in ritual of myth-representation.

W. W. Newell.

DIE ZEUGUNG IN SITTE, BRAUCH UND GLAUBEN DER SÜDSLAVEN (vol. vi. of *Κρυπτάδια*, pp. 193-381). Paris, 1899.

Folk-lore is a serious science, but unfortunately it has become the fad and pastime of society. Callow youths and gentle maidens assume an air of seriousness and dabble in matters that often ought to be left only to the ripe scholar who is devoid of all pruriency, and who can approach his subject in the spirit of an alienist and medical practitioner. The result of this society interest in folk-lore is that, while no case of psychopathy and degeneracy is ever excluded from medical works, the student of popular customs and beliefs has to betake himself to secret publications, that cannot be procured through the ordinary channels of trade, when he wants to study a subject such as the present book contains. The author, F. S. Krauss, justly remarks in the introduction that "the title *Κρυπτάδια* is incorrect for this collection, for texts are given that are sung in public, generally during the performance of the round dance. The facts that are offered here are no secrets." Above all, it must be noticed that the philologist will find here a valuable vocabulary of words for which he will in vain look in any of the dictionaries of the southern Slavs. The texts themselves with their explanations throw a light on many dark points in the marriage ceremonies of various nations, particularly on the common custom of stealing the bride. For a common understanding of similar matters contained in Krauss's *Sitte und Brauch der Südslaven*, the present little volume is indispensable; it also clears up some doubtful facts in Krafft-Ebing's "Psychopathia Sexualis." Probably the most interesting part is that which treats on the songs and ballads of the round dance; the sexual nature of these is incontrovertibly proved, and one can understand why anathemas should have been pronounced against them in the Middle Ages, as for example in Iceland. In conclusion, the author says a few sympathetic words for the Croats, or rather for the country population of Croatia and Slavonia that is being rapidly Serbianized by a coterie of learned men at Agram.

Leo Wiener.